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We Are Ambassadors!

BY STANLEY ARMSTRONG HUNTER

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. II Corinthians 5:20.

WE are passing through some of the darkest hours of our century, times that try men's souls. Old securities have become insecurities, and the foundations of faith for multitudes seem to be subsiding. Recent events have changed old presuppositions. Preachers face bewildered congregations. It is hard in the presence of headlines that scream of hate and fury to share Lowell's conviction:

> Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,
> Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

For encouragement and comfort, to use the word in its biblical sense of strengthening, let us consider this great utterance of the Apostle Paul who in defeat was ever thinking of victory. "We are ambassadors for Christ"—what a title for Christians in our generation, as his, to assume! Mendelssohn in his oratorio "Saint Paul" set to moving music the words of his text, which echoed through Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, with wistful refrain, at the recent consecration of Bishop Karl Block. These Christians in the heathen city of Corinth, proud of its great temples with their famous Corinthian pillars, were after all only a despised and persecuted group. Some were serfs, many were menials, yet Paul confers upon them a notable distinction. The status of an ambassador then, as now, was honorable. Everyone knew what the word meant.

We have heard many discussions of late concerning this office in American diplomacy. "When is an ambassador not an ambassador?" people have asked, who were confused by the state department's statements regarding the status of our envoy to the Vatican, who

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had "the rank corresponding to ambassador." An ambassador is the representative of his nation and as such commands respect and authority. He is versed in the language and customs of the people to whom he is sent.

THE AMBASSADOR'S AUTHORITY

The Christian is to be in the world but not of it. He is to maintain his allegiance to his "ain countree" —what the writer of Hebrews called a better, that is a heavenly country. How can he be satisfied with the "world" as it has been, life organized apart from God, when he sees the amounts paid for liquor and gambling, and the cost of crime six times that for education!

Great Britain trains and chooses her diplomats carefully. James Bryce, author of *The American Commonwealth,* was sent to Washington after he had completed his monumental study of our own government. When he came to Princeton to present on behalf of Sir William Mather a stone sun-dial, the copy of a famous one standing in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, he was introduced by another Presbyterian elder, Woodrow Wilson, then president of the university. As he stood before the undergraduates he seemed the embodiment of the best of his own people, in intellect, physical strength and spiritual depth. He commented on the quotation from Butler's "Hudibras" carved on the pedestal:

> Loyalty is e'er the same,
> Whether we win or lose the game:
> True as the dial to the sun,
> Although it be not shined upon.

Bryce knew how to speak a language that students understood and he won friends for his nation because of his transparent honesty and gentlemanliness. Our age has witnessed the substitution of force for gentlemanliness and the threat of vengeance in some quarters rather than understanding, but the title is still an honorable one.

Some ambassadors have been revealed by this tragic war to be weak; others triumphant, even in defeat. Some have already shared their disappointments in records such as *The Failure of a Mission.* The American custom of selecting ambassadors because of contributions to political parties may prove an expensive luxury. The wife of the publisher of a popular weekly has been describing her impressions of them freely. On the whole, we can say that our representatives have met crises heroically and have adorned their office.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

We Christians, too, are to be ambassadors! This phrase reminds us that we have God's message of reconciliation to deliver to a world that may be heedless but for its own salvation must be made to stop, look and listen. George Lansbury was scoffed at, but he embarked on his own embassy of reconciliation pleading with dictators to choose the path of peace. We have been commissioned to plead a great cause, not on our own behalf, but with higher authority. What a responsibility! We are to employ our highest skill in persuasion and every diplomatic ability that is ours to see that the message laid upon our own conscience reaches its goal. "So I am an envoy for Christ, God appealing by me, as it were—be reconciled to God, I entreat you on behalf of Christ" is the way that James Moffatt's translation puts it. Years ago when I was teaching in Allahabad, India, Dr. Arthur H. Ewing called for his favorite gospel hymn as we sang about the piano in his home. Its chorus was this: "Ambassadors to be, of realms beyond the sea. I'm here on business for the King."

The words of our text are preceded by the great declaration that God has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation. This one word sums up much of the gospel. On the way to Damascus Paul had experienced sudden conversion, after which he saw things in a different light. He came to understand how difficult it is to "kick against the pricks." He found that it is necessary to be reconciled to God's ways, and discovered that by turning about face everything became right. A carpenter cannot plane against the grain. Life must find its right relationships. Before we can become peacemakers we must experience reconciliation in our own hearts, having rooted out all hate and bitterness. We must believe that the weary strife of our common humanity can be calmed, and know that "earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal." After our contrary lives are brought into line with God's plan, we may set ourselves to work out his will. A modern word for one phase of this personal experience is the integration of personality. Paul's conversion is the story of many a Christian's experience. Through fellowship with Christ he could say, "He is our Peace."

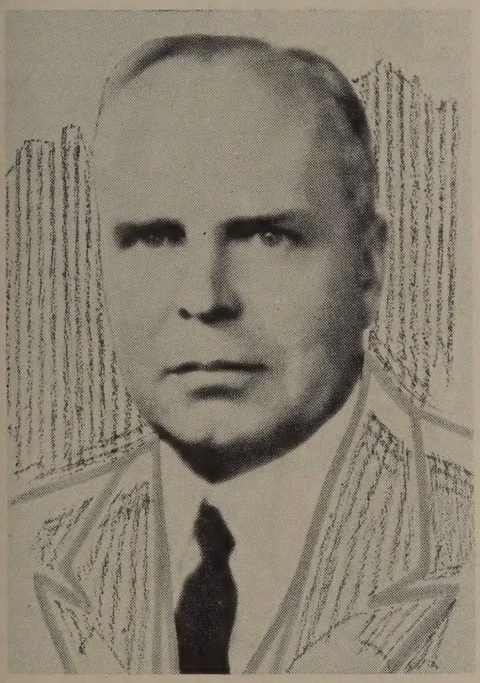
CHRIST THE WORLD'S RECONCILER

Men have fashioned strange theories of the atonement, and held up God as angry and jealous, needing himself to be reconciled. But Paul's great word is, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself"—not himself unto the world. A unique feature in our faith is the emphasis upon the double search—that while man seeks God, God is seeking him. The Master's parable of the Prodigal Son is really the story of the forgiving father who rushes out of his home to meet his erring son. Recent events have brought home to everyone that not just something but almost everything is radically wrong with our modern world. We are but reaping what we have sown. In these dark days of storm the gospel message shines as a lighthouse of hope. It is a glorious message that we have to proclaim to times like these.

Christ offers more than reconciliation for the individual: he is the world's reconciler. It is the possibility of reconciliation that we must preach, and his work of reconciliation that we must share. Sometimes we may lose confidence in its reliance upon persuasion and entreaty. We may prefer to deliver a message of hate, or force, or bitterness. The message may be unpopular. Occasionally it may be hard for some of us to resist popular appeals, as in the late agitation for conscription. "To uphold the just authority of the state" is the phrase used in the concluding article of the Brief Statement of Reformed Faith adopted in 1902 by the

General Assembly at Los Angeles. This is a check on the demands which the nation may exercise over the individual's conscience. "God alone is Lord of conscience," as our Westminster Confession of Faith asserts.

Christ's ideals must be made to rule in all departments of life. If antagonisms exist in our communities, such as racial misunderstanding, his followers must seek to be peacemakers. From Jesus we have learned reverence for personality. His high valuation of the worth of the individual must be set to work as leaven against totalitarian ideologies and the ruthless slaughter of total war. His teaching about the futility of violence is seen in his refusal to lead a military revolt in the face of oppression, and in his command to Peter to desist when the sword was drawn.



STANLEY ARMSTRONG HUNTER

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife
We hear Thy voice, O Son of Man.

We must seek reconciliation in industry and have faith like that of John McDowell in the possibility of industrialism becoming fraternalism. Christ's words today are inspiring countless builders in many lands who have caught the vision to bridge the chasms between classes.

The church itself must endeavor to become the most democratic form of social organization for it bears the name of him who said: "One is your Master, even Christ, and ye are all brethren." It can make a great contribution to democracy by resisting the fascist ideas already incorporated in recent legislation and by insisting on the rights of freedom of worship and of speech. In an election year it must rise above the bitterness of partisanship and be about the King's business.

Reconciliation must be practiced in the field of interchurch relations. We must stand ready to work together with all Christians who share the hope of reunion. Shortly after his eightieth birthday Edwin Markham came one Sunday afternoon to recite some of his poems at a vesper service in our church. One of his famous quatrains impressed us all:

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win,
We drew a circle that took him in.

Wesley used to say, "If thy heart is as my heart, give me your hand." In this spirit we sing John Oxenham's hymn:

Join hands then, brothers of the faith, whate'er your race may be,
Who serves my Father as a Son is surely kin to me.

AMBASSADORS OF MISSIONS

The missionary movement affords a telling demonstration of reconciliation. One hundred years ago next November 17 David Livingstone read Psalms 121 and 135 as he set out from Blantyre on his ministry. The modern motion picture has made him live again for our age. Even in wartime new recruits are sailing to minister to backward races, assuaging the fever of hate, casting out the devils of pride and fury, pouring into the gaping wounds of humanity the Samaritan's oil of mercy, bringing the weak back to health and strength and eternal life. What romances our mission study reveals! Do not miss Dryden Phelps' epic of the thousand-mile walk through danger of the teacher of theology in Nanking. In Japan and China our workers are forced to face totalitarianism and in Europe our Protestant brethren are heroically carrying on, despite their discouragements. If the colonies in Africa are turned over to Germany our fellow Christians there must not be deserted. But in our far look we must never forget that there is also a ministry of reconciliation for humble individuals to perform at our own doors. The migrants, for example, may present one of God's golden opportunities. National missions also has a thrilling story to tell of faithful ambassadors who have made our commonwealths what they are. Robert Freeman's hymn, "Braving the Wilds All Unexplored," recounts the efforts of these "dreamers of dreams and pioneers."

Since an ambassador's main endeavor must be first to decode and then to deliver his message whole and entire, Christian ambassadors must stress the essential elements of their message. We must not allow nonessentials to obstruct or delays to hinder its delivery. God's message in its fullness must be given priority. The ambassador must concentrate and limit his efforts that the objective may be reached. "This one thing I do" was Paul's description of his earnest attitude.

The church has not always followed the great apostle in this emphasis. It has not been satisfied with proclaiming the love of God in Christ but has stopped to debate nonessential points which in some instances may

have been only personal hobbies or even prejudices about unimportant aspects of our faith. William Pierson Merrill's hymn is a rebuke to this attitude:

Rise up, O men of God! Have done with lesser things:
Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of Kings.

Rise up, O men of God! His Kingdom tarries long;
Bring in the day of brotherhood and end the night of wrong.

CREDENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

An ambassador must be able to show his credentials if his authority is questioned or doubted. Saint Paul's first-hand experience with the risen Christ on the way to Damascus provided him with his commission. He would allow no man to challenge it. The transformation was so vital that his associates inevitably knew that something happened to him, without his telling them. Emerson used to say: "Men of God have always, from time to time, walked among men, and made their commission felt in the heart and soul of the commonest hearer." Christian character and experience authenticate themselves and provide credentials which the world soon recognizes.

First-hand experience of God's redeeming love is better than second-hand religion. "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," is Saint Paul's declaration to Timothy. We must try to keep unclouded in dark days our vision of God, for therein lies the source of our authority. Its possession is our credential. The author of the Book of Revelation speaks of seeing the great white throne against a darker background than ours. This necessitates adequate time for meditation and prayer and the adaptation for modern usage of ancient techniques of spiritual experiences. The age cries for seers, but seers are the product of long discipline and training. The writer of the Book of Revelation was able to see "the great white throne" of God's justice against war's background because of this.

LOYALTY TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

To be a faithful ambassador demands not only adequate training, but pre-eminently unshaken loyalty to the homeland. The Christian ambassador can never forget that his "citizenship is in heaven." In all his actions he sees things under the aspect of eternity. Fifteen centuries ago, when Augustine witnessed the collapse of contemporary Roman society, he turned to contemplate "The City of God" and left us his glorious vision of it. The old gospel hymn had the haunting refrain—"I'm a pilgrim, I'm a stranger." It reminded its hearers of that country which sometimes in the rush of our modern life it is easy to forget. The material impinges constantly on our senses but the spiritual world can be known by those whose gaze is not limited to the seen, but who know the permanent and sustaining power of the unseen.

Sir Cecil Spring-Rice was Britain's ambassador in Washington during the darkest hours of the First World War. Shortly before his death in 1918 he wrote a poem of two verses. The first voiced his undying loyalty to his country and the second his devotion to that wider cause which we call the Kingdom of God, which is served by higher means. Here is the poem, wrought out in a time of deep darkness:

I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love:
The love that asks no question; the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

And there's another country I've heard of long ago
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering.
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness and all her paths are Peace.

THE URGENCY OF OUR MESSAGE

The message which you and I are joyfully to proclaim is that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and that he "will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." He is seeking to bring our erring, lost humanity to its senses, wooing it with winsome love, calling it back to joy and peace. Sharing in that purpose is our task today. It is hard to hold fast to love in the presence of blitzkriegs and not be tempted to answer violence with violence.

Does anyone doubt that ours is a world almost lost because of reliance on force? We have relied in vain on commerce and science and education and many other things to save us. Surely we are convinced now that only God's plan will work; that "the church has the answer." It is high time for our generation to be persuaded to try it before we perish.

Deuteronomy chapter eight describes the land which Moses was not permitted to enter, in terms that we can apply to our own commonwealth. It closes with these words of warning: "It shall be, if thou shalt forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish; because ye would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God."

THE FINAL WORD is not with tragedy. In the midst of all the brutal struggle there are constructive forces, untiring, outnumbered as yet, but already laying the foundations of a world in which the cruelties and stupidity of this present one will have no place. There are soldiers of peace, as well as of war, and they shall, they *must* prevail! Don't give yourself over to cynicism and despair! For, "to have faith is to create; to have hope, is to call down blessing; to have love, is to work miracles."

Address to the Living.

Where Is Thy God?

A Jewish New Year Sermon

By Beryl D. Cohon

MORE than one of you have said to me in the course of the past year, "Well, Rabbi, where is God?" Most of you who said this spoke half in jest, half in earnest; some of you registered embarrassment in your voices when you said it, and some of you perplexity, even anger.

All of us have been asking this question in the course of the past year. With the world in convulsions, with an appalling horror rocking the earth, nations collapsing one after another, cities devastated by eighty-ton tanks and diving bombers, all that decent men have loved and cherished flouted—only a moron could remain unperturbed, only the feeble minded could refrain from flinging desperate questions to the high heavens.

Where is God? It is an earnest question, issuing from our pain of soul. We have known deep searchings of heart these past months. Some of you within the hearing of my voice have been driven like dry leaves in the storm. You are here—thank God for the refuge that is yours; but your loved ones are scattered to the four ends of the earth. Some, perhaps, are in concentration camps; some have been mercifully summoned to the Great Beyond and eternal peace.

Why is all this? Where is God?

GAINING THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE

It is an ancient question. Our fathers before us have asked the same question, and in the many ages before them the same hard words were heard. Let us remember that. There is healing in this knowledge. We are not an isolated target of an enraged Jove. It is part of the growing pain of the race. The suffering ages before us have known the same ordeal. The only difference is that our tragic performance is more scientifically administered on a vaster scale.

Precisely the same question was spoken by an unknown poet whose lines of despair and hope are preserved in the forty-second Psalm. He found himself in exile, expatriated from his country and his shrine. These words—and others with the same disconsolate note—were ever on the lips of our fathers:

> I will say unto God my Rock: "Why hast Thou forgotten me?
> Why go I mourning under the oppression of the enemy?"
> As with a crushing in my bones, mine adversaries taunt me;
> While they say unto me all the day: "Where is thy God?"

The lines of another poet haunt us today. He, like ourselves, lived at a time when enraged warriors were on the march, looting, plundering, turning cities into "perpetual ruins," violating shrines, braying defiance where once pious men spoke prayers:

> They said in their heart: "Let us make havoc of them altogether."
> They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.
> We see not our signs;
> There is no more any prophet;
> Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.
> How long, O God. . . .

Many, many centuries ago were these words spoken. It is well to remember this fact. It gives us perspective for today's dark hours.

"Where is thy God?" In raising this question and seeking an answer, I do not mean to defend God. The Almighty does not need our defense. Perhaps the poorest reasoning recorded in our literatures is that in de-

Beryl D. Cohon

fense of God. The statement of Zophar in response to Job's frenzied questionings of God's justice is sound:

> Canst thou find out the deep things of God?
> Canst thou attain to the purposes of the Almighty?
> It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?
> Deeper than the nether world; what canst thou know?

Not to justify the ways of God but to snatch a bit of light for ourselves in this black gloom in which our world is spinning do we raise the question anew. We must find the beam, as aviators do, and follow it. We need this beam—need it desperately. We need it to gain perspective on ourselves, perspective on our pitiful world, perspective on our little systems that seem to have had their day. And we need courage. We must live. We must be strong, now more than ever.

IT IS MEN WHO MAKE WARS

I wish to place before you two major considerations in response to the question before us.

First, let us bear in mind the fact that it is men, not God, who make wars. Men, not God, are flying in

bombers and dumping tons of explosives on cities in the night. Men, not God, are torpedoing ships. Let us not blame God for our stupidities, for our ineptitude in living together as a decent community, for our voracious greed, for our astounding conceits, for our deplorable inhumanities.

We have been richly endowed by our Creator. We have been given a generous earth—an earth rich with all man needs and more. The earth is not withholding its bounty. It is giving us enough, and more than enough, to sustain in dignity all the children of man. The skies above us are spacious and beautiful. Last summer I stood on Star Island, off the New Hampshire shore, and watched a gorgeous double rainbow arch the vault of heaven. The words of our tradition came to my lips, and I spoke a prayer I learned in childhood: "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, who rememberest the covenant of peace." But these words turned to mockery. I felt as if an electric shock shot through my heart. I suddenly became aware of the newspaper in my hands and its tremendous headline reporting nazi bombers pulverizing England. But it is man, not God—not the heavens—who releases these bombers. The heavens drop dew—gentle dew—to revive the slumbering forces of the earth. We have been endowed with a sense of right, with a sense of moral responsibility; we have been blessed with marvelous gifts. What wonderful contraptions do we make! Let us not in our thoughtlessness blame God for our misuse of his gifts.

We religious people believe that a moral law controls the lives and destinies of men. The world is grounded in loving-kindness, says the psalmist. That is his way of saying that moral law operates in the universe as surely as does the law of gravity. Violate it and the whole world feels the shock. There is moral cause and moral effect. If we sow the wind we must reap the whirlwind. That is what is happening today. We have cultivated a state of international lawlessness, sheer tribal gangsterism; we have studiously inflated our stupid egos with racial arrogance; we have made a cult of brute force and have mechanized our savagery with scientific precision and appalling cruelty; we have invested bigoted fanatics with absolute power over the lives of millions and over vast empires. What might we reasonably expect of such a situation? We have plowed iniquity and sown mischief. We are reaping a bitter harvest.

MAN STILL IN HIS INFANCY

We must bear in mind a second consideration if we are to think helpfully in considering the question, "Where is thy God?" We must gain historic perspective on the whole drama of man's place on earth as a morally responsible human being. As human beings who are guided by what we call conscience, as over against sheer instinct, we are still in our infancy. Morally we are only infants learning to walk. Thus far we have been crawling on all fours. If we fall and hurt ourselves, it does not by any means signify that God has deserted us.

We speak of conscience, morals, character, social idealism, duty and honor. But these are still in their early stages of development. Time was when our savage ancestors knew nothing and felt nothing of these. Man had been a fully developed, shrewd, cunning, cruel maker of weapons for countless thousands of years before the whisperings of conscience began to disturb his breast. James H. Breasted's book, *The Dawn of Conscience,* is devoted to this theme. It is a salutary and encouraging volume to read now. "Man became the first implement-making creature not later than the beginning of the Ice Age, probably a million years ago, and possibly earlier. At the same time he became the first weapon-making creature. For perhaps a million years, therefore, he has been improving his weapons; but it is less than five thousand years since man began to feel the power of conscience to such a degree that it became a potent social force," Dr. Breasted testifies.

All the explosive, highly dangerous gifts which science has brought us have been dumped into the play pen where the moral infant is just learning to stand unaided. If we fall and bruise ourselves and cry in frenzy, "Where is thy God?" "Why doesn't he do something about it?" let us remember that we are still infants learning to walk as a morally-responsible society rather than as a predatory pack. Comparing the social evolution of the human race with the biologic development, Julian S. Huxley states that we are a little higher than a fish and still lower than a reptile.

TAKING THE LONG LOOK

Cold comfort, you say? Granted that it is man, not God, who makes wars; granted that we are still infants in the sphere of moral evolution; but we are between the upper and the nether millstones at this moment. What of our personal misfortunes?

At a time when such violent dislocations of our economic, political, spiritual world are taking place, to think and talk in terms of personal, individual complaint and individual salvation is childish. We must learn to identify ourselves, and lose ourselves, in the vast forces that are shaping our destinies. There is no room in the world today for petty thinking and petty feeling. The facts of men and the destinies of nations are intertwined.

We must brave the storm, brave it with spirit, brave it with confidence, not quarrel petulantly with the winds as to our own personal affairs. We are only infants learning to walk. Give us time. Give us a million years of the life of conscience, as man has known as a weapon-making brute, and we shall transform this lunatic planet into a decent abode for an honorable race of human beings.

I venture a prophecy. It is born of faith in a moral God and faith in man who is capable of the moral life. I venture the prophecy that out of the blood and tears of our time will emerge a brighter, cleaner, juster world. This is not the world's end but the world's beginning. Purged and chastened, humanity will arise reborn and redeemed. We see mighty signs of this rebirth. The feelers in the direction of a common citizenship among the English speaking peoples are heralding the dawn of a new day. It may fail. Blundering hu-

manity may have to wade through more blood and tears, and our children and children's children may have to cry as we cry today, "Where is thy God?" but, as sure as God lives, the new day must come.

Mankind will emerge from this dreadful nightmare with a fierce hatred of all instruments of war, hatred of tribal nationalism that placed these weapons in the hands of fanatic leaders. Man the moral agent will triumph over the weapon-forging brute. This is my prophecy. The day is coming when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and learn war no more"; days are coming when "none shall hurt and none destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea."

'HOPE THOU IN GOD'

A picture I saw several months ago has been haunting me. One of the bombardments which have been scourging England smashed an insane asylum and some of the inmates escaped. This picture shows a tall, gaunt man, with a bony face and big black eyes staring ahead. Back of him is a house in ruins. In the lower corner of the picture, in front of him, is an outstretched hand beckoning him—the hand of a guide who is seeking to bring him back. There he stands amidst the ruins—helpless, hopeless, staring but evidently not seeing the hand that would guide him.

This picture is a symbol of what is happening to us. A crazed humanity stands amidst the ruins it has wrought. Will it finally recognize the Hand that is bidden in the shadows?

I will say unto God my Rock: "Why hast Thou forgotten me?
Why go I mourning under the oppression of the enemy?"

As with a crushing in my bones mine adversaries taunt me;
While they say unto me all the day: "Where is thy God?"

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why moanest thou within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him,
The salvation of my countenance and my God.

THAT muddy water of the mind, muddied by all the foolish little thoughts which like a sediment infest it—if you leave it alone it will become clear of itself. Sometimes walking along the common road after a shower, you have seen pools of water lying here and there, dirty and unsightly with the mud stirred up by the hooves of men and animals. And then returning some hours afterwards you have looked again, and lo each pool has become a lovely mirror reflecting the trees and the clouds and the sunset and the stars.

So this mirror of the mind. Leave it alone. Let the ugly sediment of tiresome thought and anxieties, and of passing over one's self-importances and duties, settle down—and presently you will look on it, and see something more beautiful than you ever yet beheld—a reflection of the real and eternal world such as is only given to the mind that rests. EDWARD CARPENTER.

How Shall We Meet Discouragement?

BY WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, JR.

David encouraged himself in his God. I Samuel 30:6.

CHARLES LAMB once remarked that "our spirits grow gray before our hairs," and there is truth in his comment. Often the storms come and beat upon us, seeking to wear us out and pin us down, and we are hard pressed by the struggle. At times we strike our sails and give up, tired out by the pressures of day-to-day existence. Life is no safe and easy voyage; there is no one who could not say with the fisherman, "My skiff is little and the sea is big." Every one of us has his handicaps, his limitations, his failures, and occasionally we become discouraged. Some plan close to our hearts goes awry, some trouble comes, some loved one dies, and life seems worthless to our dejected eyes. Yes, all too often "our spirits grow gray before our hairs."

To these familiar matters that discourage us there has been added in the past generation an extraordinary series of world-wide disappointments. We thought the First World War would make the world safe for democracy and put an end to future wars; it has not. The war was followed by a peace which has proved to be disillusioning, with the League and the World Court finally succumbing to the pressure of power politics, with the prosperity of the 'twenties ending in the world-wide depression of the 'thirties, and with the peace movement, which had assumed impressive proportions in almost every country, failing to stop the ever widening encroachments of militarism. Promising developments like the Washington naval treaty, disarmament and economic conferences, the Locarno and Kellogg-Briand pact did not accomplish what we had hoped, and now another great war is upon us. Small wonder that a third-grader, when asked by his teacher, "What is the shape of the world?" replied: "Father says it's in about the worst shape it's ever been!"

HOW DAVID 'ENCOURAGED HIMSELF'

Granting the truth of this, however, what we want to know is not that grounds for discouragement exist but how to meet discouragement when it comes. The example of David, Israel's great king and psalmist, is helpful here, for even though he did live three thousand years ago the struggles of the human spirit are still the same. David had his troubles, plenty of them. Saul was insanely jealous of him and continually tried to kill him—Saul, who was his king, his best friend's father, and his own father-in-law. Almost any man would become discouraged if his wife's father wanted above all else to cut his throat. But apart from his personal misfortunes, the times themselves were enough to make a brave man weep. Israel was torn by internal strife, harassed by the Philistines, and without its great leader and judge, Samuel, who had just died. And to cap it all, the Amalekites had just sacked and burned David's city and carried off the women and children,

including his own family. His followers thought of killing him, so angry were they that he had let such a thing happen. "And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in his God." That is a great word to come down out of those troubled times to these.

The tragedies of any age will never be mitigated by pessimism. In meeting discouragement we must learn first of all to face the unpleasant facts of life squarely and avoid a negative attitude toward them. In the midst of a terrific situation, David faced it; he "encouraged himself in his God." It would be foolish to lose hope just because we do not find perfection. We live in the kind of world where disappointments are inevitable, and the beginning of wisdom is to accept that fact. No one has ever lived who has not at one time or another had his plans frustrated, his desires thwarted, his hopes crushed. The author of Ecclesiastes was merely recording a fact of life when he wrote "all things come alike to all." Indeed they do! To know discouragement is the common lot of mankind.

DISCOURAGEMENT THE BACKGROUND FOR HOPE

Interestingly enough, the higher one goes in the scale of life the more room for discouragement one finds. The dull, insensitive fellow who lives on the low level of the flesh has few high capacities and suffers relatively few disappointments. Whenever the area of a person's awareness is extended, whenever his interests are broadened and his sympathies deepened, the range of possible disappointments is increased. The more sensitive a man is to the beauty of life the more its ugliness pains him. The truer he is the more dishonesty hurts, the better he is the more concerned he is about evil. The price of insight, vision and faith is always the certainty that you will have to face more disappointments than would otherwise come your way. Discouragement is the other side of one of humanity's noblest attributes, the ability to hope.

Mussolini is probably not too dispirited by world conditions today, for he thinks that war is the normal and rightful state of man. His aims for the world are low, so his discouragements from the world are relatively few. Contrast this with the Christian attitude, that sees not a world continually rent by conflict but a world of cooperation and brotherhood, freed from war and armed invasion. Your Christian is much more discouraged than Mussolini because his prophetic insight perceives much higher possibilities in life. He envisions a world community in which nationalistic feelings will be as anachronistic as county feelings are today. In 1860 a Marylander is reported to have said this: "I am firstly a citizen of Harford county, secondly a citizen of Maryland, thirdly a citizen of the United States." That sounds old-fashioned to us, but some day it will sound just as queer to say, as we now do say: "I am firstly a citizen of the United States, secondly a citizen of the Western hemisphere, thirdly a citizen of the world."

No, as man's character expands his loyalties enlarge and he becomes a citizen of the United States rather than of Harford county, a citizen of the world rather than of the nation. And as his vision grows, his disappointments will grow also. To see great possibilities is always to experience many defeats. We must face this fact if we would meet our troubles well: discouragement is a natural part of life; it is the price we pay for freedom.

NO IMMUNITY FROM DISAPPOINTMENT

Even in the highest realm we know, the realm of Christhood, it is evident that no immunity from disappointment exists. Think of the discouraging aspects of Christ's work: it lay in a small and obscure field; it stirred up the bitter animosity of privileged people and the implacable opposition of religious leaders; and its true import was understood by only a handful. The loyalty of the disciples cracked under pressure, the friendship of the multitudes turned to indifference and persecution, Jesus' own family thought him mad, and he realized that crucifixion would shortly be his lot. Certainly our Lord was no stranger to discouragement; he faced it all of his life. Yet though the storms and winds of the world beat upon Jesus, they never crushed him; he "encouraged himself in his God."

Indeed, disappointment and discouragement are not only natural but also necessary to human life, and certainly to Christian character. It is impossible to conceive of a world which could produce strong character without failures to overcome, difficulties to face, handicaps to deal with and suffering to endure. Even if one were gifted with omnipotence one could hardly avoid the kind of world, if one were interested in character, where there would be freedom of choice, the possibility both of progress and reaction, the presence of ugliness and falsehood as well as beauty and truth. How could one make a world, and how could such a world ever make men, in which there could be pleasure without pain, leisure without work, good without bad?

No, discouragements are as necessary to strength of character as dams are to a river that generates electricity: they impede its flow but they increase its power. President Eliot of Harvard once remarked that the fundamental quality essential to a successful college president is "the capacity to inflict pain." He realized that no boy was ready to meet life until he had learned how to meet obstacles. Indeed, no man has begun to live at all until he has learned that discouragement is inevitable and essential; that is the beginning of wisdom. "Shun not the struggle: face it, 'tis God's gift." David was in a disastrous situation, yet he met it squarely; he "encouraged himself in his God."

'PERPLEXED, BUT NOT UNTO DESPAIR'

The second fact to remember about meeting discouragement is this: never despair because of it. As long as everyone has to face it and your particular lot is probably no worse than your neighbor's, did you but know his as well as your own, there is no reason to abandon hope. Yet how often we are tempted to think that the Almighty has singled us out for an especially hard visitation, when in reality we are no worse off

than many others, and far better off than most. "All things come alike to all"; yes, but they do not have the same effect upon all. No house can escape storms, but it can escape falling.

Paul had "a thorn in the flesh" like everyone else but he refused to be beaten by it. On every side he was hurried, but not hemmed in; pursued but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed. Though his outward man decayed, his inward man was renewed day after day. Paul wrote that the slight trouble of the passing hour amounted to nothing. He spoke of his light afflictions as being almost beneath notice. Yet what were they?—shipwreck, arrest, imprisonment, lashings, beatings, hunger and thirst, ostracism, peril of sword; these were Paul's "light afflictions" about which he was "perplexed, but not unto despair." What a magnificent man he was! Like David, "he encouraged himself in his God."

William H. Hudnut, Jr.

We need the perspective of such men. They were sons of encouragement, whereas our troubles are apt to defeat us and make us feel persecuted and abandoned. Life becomes too much for us, threatens to destroy us, and so deep are we beneath the black cloud of discouragement that we despair of any silver lining. That is precisely where we make our mistake, for no victory can be won if it is first despaired of. We need the right perspective on the discouraging aspects of life, and then we will be prepared to meet them. As Carlyle so truly wrote, "We cannot stand firm *in* time until we have gained a foothold *beyond* time." We need God's point of view if we are to prevent our discouragement, in these days of ever thickening clouds, from turning into despair.

We have already admitted that we are discouraged about the world, but is this any cause for despair? Life's greatest triumphs are usually born in an atmosphere of profound discouragement that has been resolutely kept short of despair.

TRIUMPH OUT OF DISCOURAGEMENT

We think we live in the grandest country in the world, but it was not ever thus. Whatever we have grown into was first cradled in very discouraging circumstances. Listen to an Englishman who visited us in 1760:

> Fire and water are not more heterogenous than the different colonies in North America. Nothing can exceed the jealousy which they possess in regard to each other. The inhabitants of Pennsylvania and New York have an inexhaustible source of animosity in their jealousy for the trade of the Jerseys. Massachusetts Bay and Rhode Island are not less interested in that of Connecticut. Even the limits and boundaries of each colony are a constant source of litigation. In short, such is the difference of character, of manners, of religion, of interest in the different colonies, that I think, if I am not wholly ignorant of the human mind, were they left to themselves, there would soon be a civil war from one end of the continent to the other; while the Indians and Negroes would, with better reason, impatiently watch the opportunity of exterminating them altogether.

That is how we impressed visitors one hundred and eighty years ago. But in the light of subsequent events was that man's pessimism justified? He doubtless thought he was being realistic and practical, as many cynics feel today. On the contrary, he was a fool; he failed to see in a given situation the high possibilities that were there. He saw only the low ones. If there is one thing history teaches us more than another it is this: never despair! "David encouraged himself in his God."

Is it not sensible to feel that the League of Nations today is to the world community of tomorrow what the colonies of 1760 were to the America of 1940? Why do we despair of the League, why do we lose our faith in the ideal of world citizenship, why are we suddenly so convinced that after all the only way toward a better world is in a collective preponderance of brute force? The League idea is not dead, the hope of a federated Europe is not dead, the vision of a warless world is not dead. They are temporarily stalemated, to be sure, but the future is theirs. It must be, it has to be, it is God's will that it should be. Let us never allow our temporary mood of discouragement to develop into a permanent attitude of despair. David was not made of any such weak stuff; he "encouraged himself in his God."

TRANSMUTING DESPAIR INTO HOPE

A final suggestion as to the course to follow in dealing with discouragement is this: we must learn to use our disappointments, to change them into something fine, to be stronger and nobler because of them and to make a spiritual contribution in spite of them. The human spirit is the world's great alchemist; it can al-

ways transmute a base metal into pure ore if only it wills to do so.

I am sure the psalmist was hinting at this when he wrote of God's followers that "passing through the valley of weeping, they make it a place of springs." Of course, that is what to do with discouragement—transform it, rise above it, be superior to it, make a plus out of minus, put something positive where there was only negation. Like Barnabas we must be sons of encouragement, alchemists of the soul who change the dross of life into the light of the world.

'GOD ALLOWED TO GUIDE'

There is nothing theoretical about this. It is the practical way in which a Christian handles his troubles. He does not seek to avoid them, he does not despair because of them, but rather accepts them, sees beyond them and transforms them into some positive value. If he is in physical pain, he tries to use that pain to help others. Paul had some sort of physical infirmity, we know not what. Fortunately he was not a modern hypochrondriac or we should have had his illness described in detail. But whatever his "thorn in the flesh" was, he knew what he was talking about when he wrote this: "the pain God is allowed to guide ends in a saving repentance." That is one of the great sentences of the Bible, and we owe its brilliant rendering to Dr. Moffatt. How true it is! "The pain God is allowed to guide . . ."; yes, that is the way to deal with discouragement or suffering—let God guide your attitude toward it, and it will end in a saving repentance for you and many others.

There is no witness to the spiritual life quite so effective as the person who meets trouble beautifully. He may not be able to solve the situation or explain it, but he has transformed it by being spiritually superior to it. That is the Christian witness. "Passing through the valley of weeping they make it a place of springs."

MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT WE HAVE

In any situation there are two sets of circumstances: one, those beyond our control; two, those within our control. Some people spend all of their time worrying about elements beyond their control and do nothing about those within their control. They become discouraged about what they cannot do and forget what they can do. There is a fine flavor, on the other hand, about a person who accepts what is beyond his power to change and concentrates on what is within his power to transform. Ole Bull, for instance, the famous Norwegian violinist of the last century, had a string break while playing in Paris but finished his concert on the other three—the broken string was beyond his control, but three were still within it. That is how to meet discouragement.

Ten years ago at Forest Hills I watched the play in the national tennis championships, but what interested me more was an older man on a side court who was playing beautiful tennis with one arm. Always a lover of the game, he had lost his right arm in a hunting accident. But that did not stop his tennis; by no means! He learned all over again, and went on to win the veterans' championship with his left arm alone. One string had snapped, yes, but his spirit had not broken. He knew how to meet discouragement.

There is a little boy near Hillsboro, Ohio, whose legs are useless from paralysis. Yet he has started a paper which has already achieved a wide reputation, with many famous people on the mailing list, all the way from Senator Taft to Shirley Temple. He has nine hundred subscribers in thirty-six states and four countries, and he writes: "I am the proud possessor of everything it takes to make a success, even though I am a cripple." One of his strings has snapped, to be sure, but he goes on playing with the other three. That is the way to meet discouragement.

OVERCOMING OUR BONDS

Sometimes I think that the Christian religion's strongest asset is its teaching that each one of us may develop the God-given power to overcome the bonds that fetter him. He may not be able to break them nor to explain them, but he can rise above them and conquer them. A person suffering from some dread misfortune may not be able to cure it but he can transcend it and be superior to it. His limitations can become his opportunities. The distinctive Christian note in life's orchestra is no uncertain flute playing a pessimistic obligato, but a trumpet sounding a call of triumph. "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." "David encouraged himself in his God," and so can we. That is the way to meet discouragement.

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and o'erwork'd, how fare you in this scene?"
"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*"

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

Let us remember that whatever may befall, there are many beautiful and lovely things which no evil event can totally destroy. There will still be sunset and evening star, and the calm beauty of the night. The meadow lark will continue to thrill the air, poppies will continue to color the hillsides, and flowers to bloom in our garden. Friendship will remain, love will never lose its tenderness, and children will gladden us with their joy. While if we stop to listen, we shall always hear the still, small voice of God within the soul, speaking of the eternal right and truth over which the madness of warring nations and the schemes of evil men have no final power.

HORACE WESTWOOD.

The Christian Life-Form

By Clarence Seidenspinner

THE old idea that a Christian is different from other people persists. It is rooted in the Apostolic church, for in the very earliest days Christians were expected to be different from Jews and pagans. Writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul said: ". . . that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind . . . that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Living in a pagan world as he did, Paul knew that the Christian had to be different from the world if there was to be any value at all in the Christian way of life.

Unfortunately this distinction between the Christian and the world faded somewhat after the Edict of Freedom in 312 A.D. when Constantine put Christianity on an equal basis with other religions. Once the Christian had to suffer humiliation, economic disaster and sometimes physical violence for the sake of his religion. After 312, however, Christianity was not only respectable; it became the favored religion of the emperor, and multitudes of people sought baptism because the old distinction between the Christian and the world had been done away.

TABOOS OF PURITANISM

Monasticism was the protesting movement against the growing worldliness of the church. Numbers of men felt that they could not devote themselves to the worship and service of God through Christ Jesus in the ordinary patterns of contemporary behavior. So they followed the lead of such men as Jerome and Benedict who, by poverty and chastity, had established oases of worship and fellowship, retreats from the tumult of a disconsolate time in order that God might be more perfectly served and adored.

This distinction was brought to curious expression in Puritanism, the particular manifestation of it with which we are familiar. Puritan asceticism operated in the realm of pleasure, certain restrictions being put on social fellowship, amusements and culture. Even twenty years ago Methodists were expected to refrain from theater going, card playing and dancing. Taboos existed concerning the arts, particularly in their use by religion. At one time Puritan churches were stripped of color, storied windows, historic chancel appointments and ornamentation. Even the noble music of the organ was silenced. In general, it was thought, art proceeded from the devil. These taboos persist, for even now some of you would be horrified to come to church and discover, not a preacher, but an interpretative dancer, to lead you in the worship of God.

Puritanism operated in the realm of pleasure but not in the realm of economics, for rugged Puritans made money, got rich, and achieved honored and impregnable social position.

Though an occasional taboo persists, these old distinctions between the Christian and the world have now all but died out in the general public mind. Now and then their memory may cause a twinge of remorse, a bit of uneasiness, but generally speaking the distinction between the Christian and the man of the world is not very marked.

FORM IN THE ARTS

There are some people, however—perhaps a slowly increasing number of people—to whom the old distinction remains, not in the Puritanic sense, but richly, vitally, vividly. Their experience is so satisfying and their lives achieve such significance that I know you will be interested in the way in which they have made the old distinction concrete. They have shown us the difference between casual, mediocre existence, and significant Christian living.

The key to significant living is form. A good many people are frightened by this word "form." They think of an elaborate ritual, a highly adorned worship. The opposite of form, however, is that which is casual. Perhaps people do not like the word "form" because they want to live casually and escape the disciplines which form imposes.

The true meaning of form is easily understood when we consider its place in the arts. At the base of the arts—music, architecture, painting, poetry and fiction—are the ordinary experiences of life. The artist simply takes some ordinary experience and heightens it, interprets it, preserves it, by giving it form. The form may be a novel, a building, a picture or any of the remaining forms of art. Some experience which might have perished is preserved and interpreted for others in a form.

Take outdoor recreation. Every fisherman knows that life is vastly more worth the living after a day with rod and reel on some deep shadowed bass lake. Every golfer is renewed on his green, every swimmer is refreshed by the cool fingers of the water, every hiker is restored by the sweep of far horizons. To share this experience with family and friends at home is a different matter. The most that many a fisherman or golfer is able to say at night is, "Gosh, I feel a lot better!"

INTERPRETING FOR OTHERS

The artist is able to give form to that experience of recreation and thus interpret it for others. Here is a person who has learned spiritual secrets from the out-of-doors and who writes:

For harassed minds, for hearts assailed by ills,
For all abrasions of the soul, all scars,
There is a panacea of tall hills,
The healing balm of rediscovered stars;
The scent of dew on sleeping ferns and grass,
The flight of homing winds to waiting trees,
And there are clouds that brush the moon and pass. . . .
Shadows and dark's pulsating subtleties.
Before the constancy of night and sky;
The certain calm; the peace. . . .

(Ethel Romig Fuller)

In this way the arts are interpretative. They do not merely present facts. They interpret these facts,

heighten them, and reveal their deep significance. They fashion the stream of experience into significant forms which give brightness to life.

CASUAL AND CREATIVE LIVING

People can do this to their own lives. They may live casually, letting the varied experiences of the week beat upon them like a meaningless barrage. Or they may bring to life a sense of direction and distinction as they give form and pattern to the stream of experience. When they do this, when they plan their lives according to some dominant purpose and design, life becomes unusually satisfying for them personally. They have a sense of living purposefully, according to a form of meaning and beauty. They have all the satisfaction of the artist as he creates a building or a novel.

Thomas Mann speaks of this in his essay on Freud, of the dark joy a man has when he lives according to some memorable pattern, when he tries to make his own life a fresh incarnation of the traditional, of some noble pattern that has persisted through the centuries because it brought significance and distinction and joy to man upon his way.

Albert Schweitzer speaks of this too, particularly of the satisfaction which results from giving Christian form to life. "Existence will thereby become harder for him in every respect than it would be if he lived for himself, but at the same time it will be richer, more beautiful, and happier. It will become, instead of mere living, a real experience of life."* Albert Schweitzer should know, for he himself has lived according to such a pattern.

Thinking of this in terms of the old distinction between the Christian and the world, what would be the life-form of the Christian today?

This is the sort of question which a thoughtful person recognizes as fundamental, the sort of question which has the power to change the whole course of his life. In answering it we are driven back to the fountain source of Christian tradition, to Jesus of Nazareth, whose mind each generation and each individual needs freshly to incarnate. Paul, the great psychologist of the early church, repeatedly affirmed this in the burning words, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

'FORM' IN CHRISTIAN LIVING

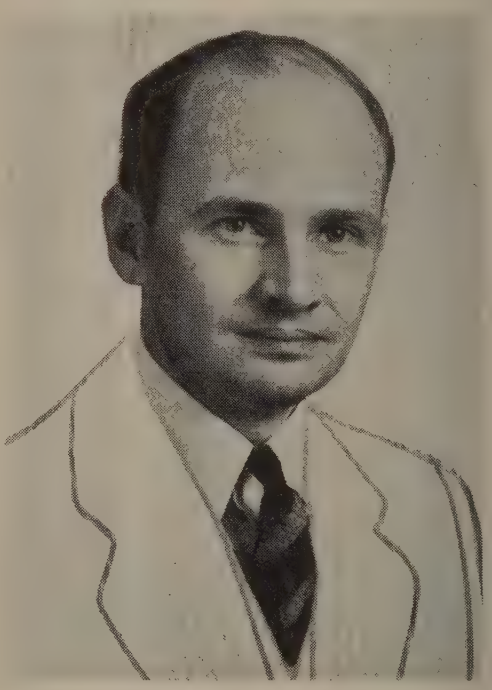
By what was the mind of Jesus characterized? Certainly by a supreme love for God. Day after day he made his meditation, discovering deeper and deeper insights into the nature of God. Day after day he lifted up his mind and emotions to God in worship. Eagerly, lyrically he sought God in worship, for he loved him. Day after day he sought to bring his own life into such union with the imperative purposes of God that finally he was able to say, "I and the Father are One."

Certainly Jesus' life was characterized by a deep love for mankind. "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." In the spirit of that golden slogan he spent his days as teacher and healer and companion. In rhythmic alternation the pattern of his life unfolded in worship and social service, back from God to man, and back from man to God.

We are not surprised to find this life-form of Jesus crystallized in his teaching as essential commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Here, indeed, is the most familiar of pictures. Yet how casually we think of it! We seldom bring it into bright relief. But if our lives are to be significant in a Christian sense we must choose forms of living which will interpret our love for God and man.

Why does everyone today know about Albert



CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER

Schweitzer, this Alsatian German who became pastor and professor at Strassbourg, concert organist and interpreter of Bach for Europe; who renounced this satisfying academic standing to study medicine, travel to the Lambarene forest of Africa, there to live as physician to the black men? There in what spare moments come to him he studies philosophy and practices on his pedal piano. From there he emerges to lecture in Europe, to play Bach upon the great organs, in order to raise money to sustain the work of his forest hospital. Why does everyone know about Albert Schweitzer? Because he has developed a form of life in which there is a significant alternation between meditation and social service, the worship of God and the creation of beauty.

Why does everyone know about Toyohiko Kagawa and Muriel Lester? Because in their lives, raised to highest index, there is this same fundamental pattern: meditation upon the nature of God and distinguished service to mankind; the intimate and almost tender

**Out of My Life and Thought* (Autobiography), page 268.

worship of God and the creation of beautiful forms.

These are great names, to be sure, but the same bright forms of life may be found in any community. I know a Y.M.C.A. secretary who meditates upon the nature of God and then rises from his study to serve, not merely the interests of his own organization, but the entire community. I know an accountant who reads and thinks and renders excellent service to the various civic enterprises of his town. On Sunday he brings his life into deep communion with God at the public worship and then tries to capture some of that heavenly beauty by directing the choral music of the church. I could tell of a woman who has thought about the major theological problems and has brought her insights into the plane of daily living in concrete personal service performed with her own hands. At the same time she is deeply moved by the public worship of God. Later she crystallizes this divine beauty by caring for the altar and chancel each week, embroidering its coverings and dossals. All the while she tends a house and manages a farm.

These people stand out because they live, not casually but carefully, not trivially but grandly, by fashioning their lives into the mind of the Lord Jesus.

BEAUTY AND LOVE EXPRESSED IN LIFE

This bright and satisfying form of life Christ covets for you all. I cannot write out a prescription for it. It is not a fascist pattern to which in its minutiae you must conform. Its possibilities are infinitely varied, growing out of your particular temperament, position and background. But within this pattern, as it seeks to fashion life according to the mind of Christ, there will be supreme love for God and a deep love for mankind.

In how many ways the love of God can express itself! There is public worship, that magnificent act of the church as it adores God, the Father Almighty, and listens to his imperative will. There is meditation, the soul in its solitude contemplating this divine universe, the leap of the mind as it discovers some new truth, the aspiration of the whole being as it offers itself to the God of truth and righteousness. In loving God there will also be the enjoyment of beauty, for beauty is significant form made possible by God, who himself is form. Beauty of starlit skies, of books, of music and that beauty which you yourself create when you venture to sing a song, to write a poem or a charming letter, or to arrange a room or a garden. This is something of what it means to love God.

In rhythmic response to these mysterious and beautiful experiences will be the concrete ways in which you express your love for mankind. There is fellowship with man in the church, your life united with his in that marvelous fellowship through which the voice of Christ is able to speak today; your life united with his in the continuous and intelligent service of the church in order that it may be strong and serve mankind.

There is always the opportunity of performing acts of personal helpfulness and kindness, deeds which wonderfully comfort and strengthen people in their need. And there are innumerable opportunities for cooperation with others in building a community which shall be a source of help and joy to all the people. This is something of what it means to love your neighbor as yourself.

Live this way and you will bring into vital, contemporary interpretation the mind of Christ. Live this way and you will indeed be different from the world—brilliantly and beautifully different.

Dare We Be Hopeful?

By Fred E. Luchs

And it was night. . . . John 13:30.

NIGHT—with all its blackness born of Cerberus in Stygian caves; night—with its blackness which covers the deep; night—which hinders the transmitting of truth. "And it follows as night the day." But, Night, you are too long! When will the day come again? When will the sun rise up in determination and drive away the darkness of night?

That is the question Christians are asking. When will the sun pierce through the war clouds; and when will Mars be overcome by love and light? When will men beat their swords into ploughshares? When will brooding darkness stop spreading its jealous wings and the night raven cease its melancholy song? "Backward, turn backward, O Time, in thy flight." Give us again that day when men loved, when morality reigned; the days of our forefathers when the milk of kindness never ceased in its copious flow. Upon hearing this request some of us rise out of our melancholy. What day when righteousness reigned? Let us turn time in reverse and let it march backwards.

A LOOK INTO THE PAST

It is the seventeenth century. Behold, the populace has turned out *en masse* to see the bonfires where heretics are slowly roasting. At least fifty thousand were burned to death in the sixteenth century. As flames leaped high, children were held up so they could the better enjoy the sight. The gruesome fact is that it was not the authorities who planned the atrocities—it was the morbid populace who demanded that criminals and prisoners be dragged through the streets and who howled for the privilege of stoning the victim if the atrocities of the authorities failed to call in death.

In 1816, in New York, were confined for debt eleven thousand persons not one of whom owed more than twenty-five dollars. One woman who owed twelve dollars was dragged to jail with an infant at her breast. The worst atrocities are too lurid and morbid to tell from the pulpit. The foul deed of the nineteenth century cannot be related in the twentieth. The modern conscience is too highly sensitized and trained to bear the worst from the past. When we behold today's injustice, let us ever remember that mercy is a comparatively recent flowering of the human spirit. A mild atrocity today stirs us more deeply than did the most cruel atrocities of two hundred years ago stir those then

alive, for a finer type of living has developed new spiritual insight and sensitiveness.

One historian has said that the people of the seventeenth century loved cruel kings and rulers because they shared their own qualities. They were counterparts of one another—obscene, cruel, unjust. Neither king nor subject realized that he was cruel, unjust or obscene. They accepted the behavior of each other as the natural order of things. People of several centuries ago swarmed to scenes of execution as we today swarm to football games. When the entrails of a drawn and quartered victim were cast on the fire to be consumed, they fought among themselves to get a liver or a kidney to take home as a trophy.

A PICTURE FROM EARLY AMERICA

We read of conditions in American colonial days which we could call unjust, but the colonists, like their European forefathers, considered them a part of normal living. Human bondage (white or black) was not thought unjust. People believed that some were born to be masters; others to be slaves. Enslaving Negroes was considered a religious undertaking, for in that way the black man from Africa could be taught the gospel. In that day the subsistence-level theory of wages was not known by the classical economists, but it was often written on the souls of the wretched working classes. The prevailing thought was: "Keep the working classes in a state of abject poverty, for prosperous working people threaten the stability of society." Such reasoning is exactly the opposite of what we believe today. Now we say, "Pay good wages as an antidote to revolution." In those days there were no labor unions. Associations of workingmen were forbidden by law. The colonial system was often a regime based strictly on wealth and land with little trace of democracy in it.

In these days parents are alarmed about the question of drink. For *what* good old days do we sigh? In Marquis James' *Life of Andrew Jackson* we read an account of the death and funeral of a relative of Andrew Jackson. A diary of the period records the amount of liquor consumed during the nights when friends sat up with the corpse, and during the trip to the cemetery. So great was the amount consumed that when the burial party arrived at the cemetery the body of the deceased was missing. So inebriated was the party that it failed to notice that the body had fallen off the sled several miles back.

SOLID BASIS FOR HOPE

On what, then, do we base our hope for the future? First, our grounds for expectations are based on the gains in public opinion and public conscience. Let us list among the gains over the past the fact that we have put behind us almost completely human sacrifice, religious persecution, subjection of women, slavery, punishment without trial, dueling to kill, uncontrolled exploitation of men, women and children in industry. We protest today what the previous century sanctioned. We repudiate today what former generations accepted. Our conscience has been quickened. Archeology tells us that culture preceded conscience. Our conscience condemns modern evil (accepted a century ago) because the culture of the past few decades has developed a quickened conscience. If the 1940 conscience is more sensitized than the 1840 conscience, that means that culture preceding 1940 was better than culture preceding 1840. If the conscience has become quickened, that means that culture has been raised to a new level. A world aware of its sins is a better world than one unaware of its shortcomings.

Our second basis for hope lies in the fact that man has caused his own tragedy. The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in the stars neither in an unjust God, but in ourselves, that we live in a chaotic, confused and terror-

Fred E. Luchs

torn world. But—what man has made, man can unmake. If we believe that demons, imps or gods initiated the evils with which we are beset, then we are hopeless when we survey the contemporary scene. But since our evils grow out of man's inhumanity to man, we can observe the situation with hope. Our situation is not like an earthquake, volcano or cyclone, but rather like a storehouse of dynamite which man himself has created —*and can control.* The greatest calamity we face today came not from the hands of an unkind God, but from the sin of man. Pierre von Passen in his *Days of Our Years* gives us a picture of one of those sins:

> I still see the scene when Chancellor Bruening arrived in Paris. For the first time, a German statesman was back in the French capitol after the Treaty of Versailles. The station was black with people, all eager to catch a glimpse of the German delegation. As Herr Bruening and his colleagues made their way from the platform to the waiting room, they passed a group of railway employees. Suddenly there was a

cry, *"Vive l'Allemagne!"* and again, *"Vive la Paix! Vive la fraternité humaine!"* The shout was taken up by thousands and thousands until the immense vault of the railway station reverberated with the roar.

That demonstration, absolutely spontaneous, by the workers of Paris, augured well for the Chancellor's visit. For days men spoke of nothing else but the reception accorded the representatives of the foe of yesterday. The German Chancellor, completely taken by surprise, had gravely returned the salute. It had been a moment of high emotion. I saw Bruening's eyes fill with tears. Everyone who witnessed the scene had to swallow hard.

* * *

But what was the object of Herr Bruening's visit to Paris? Before the imminence of a general catastrophe in the Reich, a financial and economic disaster of the first magnitude, the Chancellor of one of the great European states had come as a humble suppliant to plead the cause of the Reich with Monsieur Pierre Laval. "It was an act of desperation, foolish perhaps, and totally unexpected, but nevertheless an act of courage and greatness," as Jean Richard Bloch said at the time in *Europe*. The people felt similarly, and the instinct of the masses is seldom wrong.

France alone at that moment could have saved what remained of democracy and republicanism in the Weimar Republic.

Herr Bruening and his collaborators spent the night in conference. They had brought with them irrefutable evidence in figures and facts that Germany was on the verge of the abyss.

At seven in the morning—it was a Sunday—Bruening went to the Church of Notre Dame. He prayed for an hour and heard Mass. At ten o'clock he was received by M. Laval. The German Chancellor expressed his views, and pleaded with the French Foreign Minister for two hours. When he noticed that he could not soften the heart of the Frenchman, he fell on his knees. He spoke of the misery of his country, the sense of frustration of the German youth, the dull hopelessness of the situation if France would not lift some of the burdens imposed at Versailles. He warned of an economic debacle which might, through its repercussions, drag other countries, France herself, into a chaotic whirlpool. *He named the "Sinister Forces" that were waiting to take over the reins in Germany if he [Bruening] should fail.*

Laval shook his head. He would not even place Bruening's request for a loan, or a moratorium, before his colleagues in the cabinet. He refused to hold out the least strand of hope. He led the German Chancellor to the door with a polite expression of adieu.

It was a sunny day in Paris when Pierre Laval signed the death warrant of the German Republic—and paved the road whereby Hitler entered.*

NEW IDEALS OF SERVICE

But the pessimist will rise up and say: "This sin can be attributed to man's nature. God perhaps blundered when he created natural man. But nature is cruel, and man will yet slay his brethren because that is his original nature." Recently a biologist on our university campus said: "If insects stopped warring on each other, within five or six years no life would be left here except a few insects." Cruel nature sends insects against each other and in combat destroys them. We deplore nature in the raw and man's inhumanity to man. But if that pugnacity were not there, neither would we be. That same spirit, differently motivated, may become the fight for *life*. The pugnacious instinct, which in animals leads to destruction, may, when channeled by religion, lead to sublime service for humanity. We are grateful for this pugnacious nature when it is controlled by religion. It preserves and enriches our lives.

We have hope because we are living in a decade when great portions of the masses are seeking a spiritual interpretation of life. Four of last year's most popular Broadway plays in New York had a religious theme. There is now in America a new interest in Shakespeare which we attribute to the disturbances that people feel over problems of right and wrong and the relations of the individual personality to standards above himself. Thomas Mann in his coast-to-coast lectures on democracy stressed its ethical and spiritual basis. Rejecting the political definitions of democracy as wholly insufficient to define the democratic principle, he described it as "the form of government and society inspired above every other with the feeling and consciousness of the dignity of man." This dignity, he says, springs from man's spiritual nature. He believes the defeat of fascism lies in the resurgence of moral ideas and the positive affirmation of Christian principles. In 1929 I entered divinity school. That same year a book appeared which shook the towering faith of the fathers. Walter Lippmann's *A Preface to Morals* gave us little ground on which to stand. Now comes Walter Lippmann with a complete reversal when he tells us that religion is the very source of democracy, and makes a plea for a return to religion.

GOD STILL HELPS MEN

We dare to be hopeful because man never fails so completely that hope dies. God never deserts man in a pinch. Man in deepest distress may touch the hem of the garment of God. Emily Parker, a Quaker, wrote in her 1938 Christmas letter from turbulent Spain:

> However, it is not of war's horrors that I would write now. They are terribly, tragically real. I need no one to remind me of the grim realities of war. But my experience in Spain has shown me something of far greater significance. I have seen, as never before, good existing side by side with great evil. I have seen the good threatened, but I know now that it can never be overthrown. On the contrary, courage and kindness seem to reach peak levels. I have seen hunger come close to starvation, and in the very face of it watched little children refuse to eat their tiny piece of chocolate, saving it for a brother or sister. I have had such kindness shown me by complete strangers as I have never before known. I have seen men and women giving of their time and energy more than was wholesome or right that hungry children might be fed and homeless refugees find shelter.
>
> This is no Pollyanna game I am playing with myself. I believe in the good that I have seen. I believe in the kindness and gentleness that I have known. That is why I chose this picture of a healthy baby and happy mother. I could have selected pictures of hollow-

*From *Days of Our Years*. Used by permission of the publishers, Hillmann-Curl, Inc.

eyed, hungry babies and hopeless mothers. Such pictures are easier to find. But you would only have hated those who caused such suffering and my Christmas message would have been in vain. This picture may be the exception, but it is nonetheless real for that. Kindness and good will are no less real than bombs, and anti-aircraft guns because they are more quiet! What does size or noise prove? How tiny was the baby born in Bethlehem and how great was the power of Rome! But in Bethlehem and not Rome were laid the foundations for the commonwealth of God.

THE SUSTAINING WORD

And we hope because the Word of God sustains us. Hold up Scripture and see that men faced such conditions in the past. Will you look for a moment upon probably the most hopeless group of people history records? We call them God's people. "And it was night." What has happened? Their temple has just been destroyed and here they are—captives of the Babylonians. How can they sing the Lord's song in a strange land? There they weep when they remember Zion. Did they have hope? Harry Emerson Fosdick says, "History records few such instances of transmutation of tragedy into gain as achieved by these peoples," using the disaster of Zion to spiritualize and universalize their God. Read the twenty-ninth chapter of the book of Jeremiah and see the picture Jeremiah paints of God at work. In this famous document Jeremiah pronounces God's revelation of his universal availability—that he may be found in personal prayer, anywhere, by anyone, and at any time. The full blossoming of the universality of God, therefore, came from the bitter exile and from the influences which that disastrous experience released. Religion reached a new high level in tragedy.

The veil of night is falling on the first century, A.D. Rome rules the world. "And it was night." Out of the darkness of that world comes a name—Jesus. A few thousand people have pledged allegiance to him, but what power have they against the legions of Rome? Out of this hopeless situation came the words: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven." That idea attacked man. How strange, preposterous, ridiculous was the conviction of these early Christians that this name could conquer mighty Rome! Within three centuries Rome had fallen.

THE CONQUERING CHRIST

"And it was night"—night in Gethsemane. Jesus, with no reason for hope, prayed: "Father, let this cup pass from me—but if it is Thy will—let Thy will be done." No hope that night. No hope for three days. No hope during all those centuries when hate and force ruled men's lives.

There was always hope, for as we let history guide the march onward over centuries we see this picture:

I see the conquerors riding by with cruel lips and faces wan,
Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned; there rides the Mongol, Ghengis Khan;
And Alexander, like a god, who sought to weld the world in one;
And Caesar with his laurel wreath; and like a thing from Hell, the Hun;
And leading, like a star, the van—heedless of upstretched arm and groan—
Inscrutable Napoleon goes dreaming of empire and alone:
Then all they perished from the earth, as fleeting shadows from a glass,
And conquering down the centuries, came Christ, the swordless, on an ass.

We dare to be hopeful—because in the darkness of night we follow this "Light of the World."

Hopes That Have Root

By Paul Scherer

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Romans 15:13.

THE most noticeable fact by far about the pagan world in which Paul lived was the fact that its hopes were dead. They had gone out like so many candles sputtering in the wind. People had been looking long enough for something they could count on; and they were tired, so they had quit. That has always been one of the prime tragedies of human experience. It has left its mark even on the dictionary. Turn there to this word "hope" and you'll see. There between the lines is what the disappointed years have done to it. I find that as a noun it means a fool's paradise, some kind of mirage, a little balm in Gilead for those of us who don't live there, a will-o'-the wisp. As a verb you use it for catching at a straw, or counting your chickens before they are hatched. I think that such cynicism tells a story. These scornful definitions are not what any one man has said: this is what the ages have written! They are the bare, factual remains of all the dead hopes of the past, that were once magnificent obsessions; but now that mankind has wrestled with them a while, they lie around here in the dictionary for a warning to travelers, like dry bones in a desert.

The thing about Paul is that he always gets hold of hope with his religion; and then it becomes a different matter entirely. It is no longer a kind of "temperamental optimism" that "springs eternal in the human breast"—and just as eternally lets you down flat all at once, with the breath knocked out of you! It is something that for him has got itself tied up with God and the human soul; and it doesn't collapse any more, or run out from under. It stands around through his pages as the mountains stood round about Jerusalem: the only stalwart thing there was in a generation with bitter winds blowing, and an empire falling into ruins.

I

That is why I have chosen to talk to you about the hopes that have root: just because all of us by now are tired of fooling ourselves with other hopes; and because the Bible is very clear about those that will hold. From cover to cover in fact, it seems deliberately in-

tended to breed such enduring hopes. Paul thinks it was intended for no other purpose at all. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime," he says, "were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

The hopes that will hold are the hopes that have to do, not with the circumstances of life, but with its quality. Not with the surface of things seen—they must run deeper than that; not with the flesh, to use a word that Paul likes to use, but with the soul.

The circumstances of life, by themselves, never have made much sense. This panorama of living, bare outside of life, doesn't make sense. Thinking of life, Dr.

PAUL SCHERER

Farmer says it reminds him of a day in the heather high up on the side of a mountain. Near him was a rock, its outer edge falling away sharply into a deep valley. On the rock was a spider trying to spin his web. He let out long gossamer threads from his body, only to have them snatched up by the breeze and flung out over the cliff, pathetic and futile, catching on nothing, waving this way and that. Again and again it happened, until the spider seemed to give the whole business up as a bad job. He turned around and crept into a dark crevice overhung with bushes. There he began once more. And this time the tiny threads caught and held. Swiftly the web grew, back and forth, round and round. And before long a fly darted in among the strands, and shook them violently—only to rouse the spider by its shaking, and have its blood sucked out.

Isn't that about how life is on the outside, when you come down to it? As meaningless as that? Crowds and commuters' trains, subways, the clicking of typewriters, 'phones ringing; revolving doors, hotels, the postman, traffic, night. What in God's name does it mean? With the sorrow that piles up through it, and the broken bodies, and the wars, and the lives that go out; so much of it just a crazy jumble of noise and misery. Every man with his own little web, catching his own little flies; And now and then, we ourselves wreck the thing to build it over. What's the sense of it? Unless back of this world we see another world to give it point—a world that Jesus once packed into a sermon about the pure in heart, and people who were kind, and wouldn't judge; a world of spirit, the very groundwork and substance of which all the noise and tumult is only the shadow. The hopes that will hold are the hopes that are anchored somehow in the world of things unseen. So much we need to keep perpetually in the front of our minds.

That much quoted editorial in *Fortune* magazine made the statement that present-day Christianity has turned away from the deep spiritual values which are basic to civilization and has started pinning its faith to the surface of life—paraphernalia, machinery and profits, tools and comforts; and it's the surface that has let us down. If you're a taxpayer, the editorial went on, you have a right to be disillusioned, because you've lost your money. If you're a statesman, you have a right to be disillusioned, because you've failed to bring any tangible order out of chaos. But if you're a Christian, you've no right at all. Your grounds are spiritual grounds. You ought to know by this time that the solution to material problems doesn't lie in the realm of material things. You ought to know that the ultimate answers to the questions humanity raises are not, and never have been, in the flesh. It is for the flesh to be disillusioned, not for the soul. The spiritual fight is an endless fight. The Kingdom of God is infinitely far. The loss of one battle is not the loss of a war. And I say further, God pity the Christian church when it takes a disturbed layman to tell us that!

If I wanted to learn something from it, I think I'd at least learn in what quarter to tack up my hopes. I don't know what yours are. Perhaps you are counting on more income or better health. A schoolteacher told me the other day that she had been doing that for years. Perhaps it's a job you're hoping for. I have a friend who has been looking for a job ever since he got out of college, and he is as bitter as they come—bitter against God. Maybe it is the success your children are going to be, or some other happiness you've figured out for day after tomorrow—the difference it will make in this old world when the British win the war! I don't know what you're hoping. But I know this: if that is the kind of thing you're after, you have set your poor, hungry heart on moonshine. That simply isn't the realm where hopes are steady. When they slip and break in two and fall this way and that, as God knows they have in our world, no use telling you to keep them up. You can't. They have nothing to stand on that makes any sense.

The hopes that Christ goes on bravely arguing for are the hopes that have to do with the soul of a man—any man. Matthew's! If you had lived in Palestine then, you wouldn't have guessed that in ten guesses: not that Jesus could possibly do anything with Mat-

thew there by the money-bags. But he did! And today he is coming through the crowd toward you. Maybe you don't think it's important—this that he means to do now in your hard case, this new creature he will get to its feet if you'll let him. You'll put all that to one side, tend to it later when everything else is fixed. But what if everything else should depend on this? What if nothing could be very wrong, once this is right? That at least is the point on which the Bible commits itself. And it never commits itself on any other.

The Old Testament worthies used to think that if you were the kind of person you ought to be, you had a right to expect a fair name and a rich harvest. Listen to what God himself is supposed to be saying in the Psalms about the righteous: "Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known My name." But the Gospels come along and tell you what that means. They take the only righteous soul that ever lived, and lead him painfully up a little hill with a cross on his back! They set him on high; but it's in the dark, with his arms stretched out. I dare say you don't like such fulfillments; but they are God's kind! They have nothing to do with the outside of life. They have to do with the soul. And they are the only fulfillments I know that are sure. When a man stands on the sheer edge of this world of things, and flings out his hopes gallantly toward that world of the spirit and of God, they catch and hold. They can be disappointing; Peter's were, and Paul's many a time, and mine have been, but they can never be defeated. There is a wounded, dying Carpenter who came back from death to make them fast and keep them from slipping!

II

And that brings me to the other thing this Bible goes on saying continually about our human hopes. They've got to concern themselves first and foremost with spiritual values—and they've got to be anchored somehow outside of ourselves to the kindly purposes of God and left confidently in the eternal grip of his power. Certainly it is our plans that let us down. Nobody will dispute that. There are times when we are so thoroughly tangled up in our own designs that we even forget God has any plans for us. Some notion pops into our head and we take out after it with everything we can lay our hands on. It may be a good notion too, so good we can hardly help feeling that if there's any decency left in the world we ought to get along with it. And it brings us smack against a stone wall.

What's the answer? I'm clear about one thing. If there is nothing on this earth for me to pin to but the things I've planned, then there isn't enough on this earth to justify for me the pain of living. From the time the Bible begins its testimony, it asks us to believe that back of our little ends God has his own huge ends in view. He was in this thing at the start; that's the first page of Genesis: and he's in it still; that's the other ten hundred and sixty pages of the Book. It is his will that controls it—except when we deliberately throw him off and run away to make our own private ruin out of the good that he wanted. Even then, goes on the New Testament sturdily, God doesn't quit and give it over. He keeps patiently at it. We are the sorry bits of creation that tie life into knots with our selfishness; and he goes on trying to shake them out again. We are stubborn and wrongheaded and he takes our stubbornness in his hands, determined to see his way through in spite of it, perhaps even by means of it. Whatever the cost, he's going to manage. And when he is through he'll leave it to us, he'll leave it to anybody, whether or not the price was too high.

That's what the cross stands for. It stands for God's gracious design in the teeth of all that human life, careless, willful, sometimes vicious, can hurl against it. It stands for the Love that's back of all we can do to it, and will never let go. That is what held Jesus. When we've done the best we know how, it will hold us. Round our restlessness that rest; the calm and brooding sovereignty of that other mind.

We need some such background for our lives now, or I don't see how we can live them. Dr. John Hutton in one of his essays reminds us that the old Greek tragedies had what was called a chorus. It served any number of purposes, coming on the stage as the dramatist willed: sometimes to heighten the effect of the lines preceding, sometimes to take the minds of the horror-stricken audience away from the grim ruin of life before them to some distant, peaceful spot. He says that these last are the moments in Greek tragedy that always move him most, when with a word he is made conscious of the fact that for all the blindness and the death and the weeping, somewhere, though far, there is calm.

Then he goes on to point out how Carlyle does this too, in that great scene from the French Revolution. You've been reading of the terror, the panic, the bloodshed, until you can bear it no longer; then suddenly you come upon a quiet passage, a tranquil shore, away from it all; and ships, with idle, flapping sails swinging lightly on the tide. There is always in life more than any evil present, a present which sometimes makes the flesh creep, and the hair stand on end. There is the sea, writes Carlyle. Aye, Christ would answer, and there is God!

And that is what held Jesus. I doubt very much—and I say this with awe and in deep humility: I doubt very much if his life worked out as he had planned it. He was so sure there in the Temple that he had to be about his Father's business; just a lad he was, twelve years old; but eighteen other years got in the way—that is how it must have seemed—and kept him at a carpenter's bench in a nasty little village of Galilee. When he began his ministry at last, strode out hopefully into the great world which never had been anywhere else but on his heart, it all went quite smoothly for a while. The friendly crowds rallied round and wanted to make him a king. If you will read the story of the temptation you will understand how it must at least have occurred to him that perhaps this would be the way of it after all—miracles, and eager throngs, and the glory of many kingdoms at his feet. But the road swung sharply about and veered away. He saw

it. It meant loneliness, with nobody paying him much attention any more. Then he saw that it meant worse than that. He saw what it meant in the angry faces of the priests. He heard it in the noise of a mob gathering. Until there, under the cover of night in the garden, he had it out with himself: "Father, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me." You get the shifting of his thought, don't you? And the steadiness of his choice: "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done!" The plans that kept changing, and the one that held!

We call it courage, as he stood there the next morning before Pilate. It was simply that he had gazed into the eyes of God. They held him all the way to Calvary. Generations have named it the way of sorrow, via dolorosa: to him it was the road that led "to the world's end and to the rainbow's foot!" Perhaps he still half-expected something to go wrong with this ugly thing he was carrying. They laid him on it. Perhaps even now God would interfere and break it up. He waited until the nails were in, and the cloud drifted over his spirit. Then he knew. And he began reciting the twenty-second psalm. Nobody caught anything but the first line: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But read it all, if you want to know what was going through his mind. "Our fathers trusted in Thee: and Thou didst deliver them. Thou art he that took me out of the womb: Thou didst make me to hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. My praise shall be of Thee. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord. For the kingdom is his, and he is governor among the nations." I am not surprised that in the stillness at the end they heard him whisper: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." He had done the best he could; and with one deep breath he left it. God's purpose would hold!

Let us pray. Thou who art the God of hope, in whom all our steady hopes are born, and by whom alone they can be made fast; we would look into Thy face with confidence. It is not Thine to come behind in any one of Thy gracious promises. Go beyond them, we beseech Thee, quite beyond them, as Thou hast ever done, and prove Thyself better even than Thy word: giving us of Thy mercy such good things as our souls have never asked, and entering in with Thy peace by the very doors that we have kept locked! So bring us to trust ourselves to Thee, living our lives bravely in the knowledge of Thy sure and redeeming purpose. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

RELIGIOUS motivation is necessary in all of our service. We do our noblest work for human justice when we are urged on by religious experience rather than through superficial human aspiration.—A. B. COE.

A Pastoral Prayer

BY CHARLES N. THORP

O GOD, our Father, whose wisdom is absolute and whose love ever seeks the best for mankind, and in whose presence dwelleth the peace that passeth understanding, we feel a great calm and a renewed courage as we linger in Thy courts this day.

May we somehow forget the war and the war-makers, offenders against world understanding; may we remember that in every nation there are many brave, true souls who believe in peace and pray and labor for peace, who will not stoop to hatred or violence which disrupt Thy family circle.

Keep us immune from the contagion of warfare. Help us to live daily the love that suffereth long and is kind. May we rejoice not in iniquity but rejoice in the truth. Through all our days may we fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on the things that are of eternal value.

If we have come into Thy presence with indifference, just because it happens to be our habit, forgive us and grant us such a glimpse of Thy glory that we shall find Thy church filled with Thy majesty. Who on earth may be compared with Thee? Whose purposes compass the centuries? God be praised that the greatest Person who ever lived was great because he sat at Thy feet and dared to live according to Thy will.

We bear the name of Christians; we are associated with Thy church. O make that church, dear Father, strong and beautiful, the embodiment of the gospel of Christ. Shatter our strange self-content. Shame us out of our sins, which are many. Show us how, through each of us, Thy church may take on newness of life. Make of every one of us a living exhibit of the spirit of Jesus.

Along life's common ways rouse us to the opportunity of showing forth strength, grace, truth, kindness, patience with others, love in our homes, sunny-hearted faith in one another and the practice of prayer. Make of us the kind of people out of which Thou canst build Thy church. May we carry the church on our hearts—the church that Jesus founded, the church that Jesus loved. Through Thy church our world shall yet be led out of darkness into light.

Bless our nation; guide our President. Deliver us from bitter criticism of those who are our leaders. Thou knowest how terrible is their responsibility in guiding our nation in these troublous times. Give us a new and worthier appreciation of this land of ours. May we glory in our liberties. In every way may we so act that war may soon cease and the blessed dawn of peace appear over the world.

We thank Thee for the love that binds the years together. We would send affectionate messages to our friends and loved ones on both sides of the doorway we call death. Bless the sick and suffering, the sorrowful and the homeless throughout the earth. May Thy grace, Thy mercy and Thy peace descend upon us all and upon our world,

Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

The Pastor's Relation to Church Finances

By Ralph E. Valentine

THE present day minister faces a many-sided task. He has to be more versatile than the Sunday paper, says Albert W. Palmer, more alluring than a baseball game, more interesting than the movies, and better informed than the latest book. To this might be added: He must be a better business executive than a New York banker.

Besides preaching and pastoral service, executive leadership is required of the ministry today. Institutional Christianity represents a gigantic business enterprise. There are 212 communions in the United States, with 232,000 churches—each one with a separate business organization. These churches have a membership of 45,000,000 people, and spend each year for their current budgets the sum of $817,000,000. Church properties are valued at $3,800,000,000 and this does not include such items as parsonages, hospitals, schools and endowment investments. On the employed staffs of our churches are thousands of men and women. Millions of workers serve in volunteer capacities.

• *Church Finance a Frontier Field*

What officers administer local finances in this vast organization? Is this entirely the layman's task, or does the pastor share in the responsibility? Regardless of whose task it is, many churches need an improved ministry of finance. Here is a frontier field for exploration. A survey of church finances made by a leading theological seminary in Chicago throughout a cross-section of American churches shows that hardly 51 per cent of the membership pledge to the church; only 30 per cent of the members support missions; 67 per cent of all pledges come from folk of limited means; only 4 per cent of the budget is contributed in the loose offerings. Out of each dollar of our national income less than 2 per cent is given to religion and welfare. The administration of church finances is a large responsibility. It must be shouldered by someone.

These blunt facts startle us into the query, What is the relation of the pastor to the finances of his church? Robert Cashman, in his splendid book entitled *The Business Administration of the Church* says that every item in the program of the church is the responsibility of the minister until he can assign it to others. The efficient minister will delegate to his helpers practically all of his business duties, remembering that "it is better to put ten men to work than to do the work of ten men." Having done this, however, even though his organization be running perfectly, says Dr. Cashman, the pastor will remember that one of his vitally important tasks is that of supervision.

The finance work of the church is the layman's obligation under the direction of the minister. The pastor's

Ralph E. Valentine

duties are threefold. He must know how to do these three things: (1) to plan the program; (2) to delegate the responsibility; (3) to supervise the organization.

• *Planning the Program*

The pastor, in relation to church finances, in the first place, must know how to plan the program. To be successful financially, a church must conduct a spiritual program in which all the members will have confidence, and in which they will cooperate. Some churches are weak financially because little goes on within the life of the institution. From a study of bankrupt churches, this is plainly true—to get greater financial support the church must deserve it. The diagnosis for sick treasuries may be looked for in several places, among them—in sermons, in pastoral calling, in program and organization. The building of an aggressive program is the primary step to be taken by any church that wants to revitalize its finances.

The minister possesses the key to the financial situation. The pastor is the "spark" in the finance system. The majority of outstanding ministers, editors and church leaders whom I consulted through a questionnaire expressed this opinion. The pastor must take a vital interest in church finances. William Henry Leach, editor of *Church Management,* says that by experience, training and observation the pastor is probably the best person in the congregation to estimate the resources of the church and to suggest methods for raising money. The pastor should keep one step ahead of his finance committee and know what it is doing all the time. The successful minister today must build a good program and also qualify himself for the financial leadership of his church. The sooner he gets this idea into his head and heart, the better for him and the Kingdom.

• *Lay Leaders Should Conduct Campaigns*

The pastor plans objectives, methods, quotas, procedures. He does this in cooperation with his financial officers. The actual campaigns of the church are to be carried on by lay leaders. Sometimes it may be advisable for the minister to head these movements, but that might be robbing the laymen of the opportunity to share in the sense of achievement. The minister directs this work through his finance chairman. A finance expert says: "The minister should use a prominent layman for a build-up, but control the situation from the inside." That is saying in a very frank manner that the minister should lead the leaders in the finance program.

May the pastor legitimately solicit gifts of money from among members of his church? The judgment of many ministers is that the pastor should never accept the chairmanship of a campaign for current expenses, or take pledges for routine purposes, except in rare circumstances. There have been instances where a pastor has conducted the every-member canvass and was justified in doing it. This work should be organized and carried on by laymen. When it comes, however, to the solicitation of gifts for special purposes (memorials, pulpit furniture, organs, pulpit Bibles, etc.) the minister is in his field of rightful domain. Many successful ministers have personally solicited funds for missions and for building enterprises.

• *Working Out the Budget*

The pastor must lead in achieving a well worked out budget. In the making of budgets there should be a clear-cut division between current and benevolent giving, and the building fund or other capital giving. This distinct division is made because the

current and benevolent giving is continuous, while the capital giving is temporary. In the current giving it is essential to get a budget which represents the power of the church to give. This does not assume, of course, the actual ability to give if everyone were entirely spiritual and fully consecrated, but rather the giving power when considering the actual spiritual state of the membership. The budget should represent a spiritual challenge to the church. The pastor must lead in this effort.

The minister is responsible for the missionary and benevolent program. He should help plan the budgets and the promotion of them. Each organization within the church institution must be encouraged to assume increasing mission goals. The weight of seeing that the world service canvass receives proper attention rests squarely with the pastor.

• *The Delegation of Responsibility*

The pastor, in relation to church finances, in the second place, must know how to delegate responsibility for the financial program. This step offers the greatest challenge to the pastor.

A leading minister of the Disciples of Christ fellowship offers some practical guidance in this matter of placing definite responsibility. This man has outlined a splendid workable plan. In his church a well qualified man is selected to head the current finance work. The membership of the church is divided into six groups, which represent about equal ability to give. A captain is selected for each of the six groups, working under the general director. Under these six captains eleven helpers are carefully selected, so that there are six groups of twelve workers in each one.

There must be constant recruiting. That is, each group is never recruited to full strength at any given moment. This is due to removals, to death, and to inefficiency on the part of some who are chosen. This organization is kept intact throughout the year. Once a month the chairman of the current and benevolence finance group reports to the church in a graphic way, through the use of a board with discs, just how each group stands. The name of each captain is at the head of his group as the facts are presented to the church, thus fixing the responsibility. These six captains meet from time to time and go over the situation thoroughly. As pastor and executive, the minister makes it a rule to meet with this committee.

Concrete organization is essential in church finance. This pastor, in a church with a debt which was fast accumulating interest, entirely paid off the indebtedness in two years by this direct method. In another church where the annual current fund was a little over $3,000, this plan was used, and the pastor's salary was raised to $5,000 a year and the current and benevolent budgets together amounted to something like $30,000. The resources of that church had never before been touched.

• *Supervising the Organization*

The pastor, in relation to church finances, in the third place, must know how to supervise the organization. He must know his men, and also the forces which move them to action and keep them loyal to the finance organization. He will need to make a careful study of the administrative and promotional side of church life. Thus, with such ability and training, he will be able to organize and direct his finance forces to meet the high demands of an intensive spiritual program.

The pastor must place the financial program of his church on a year-round basis. The local church will never settle its financial problems through one every-member canvass a year. Stewardship training and solicitation of pledges must be worked into a year-round program. The ministry of finance should be so supervised that canvassing groups will be active constantly as members get in arrears. The annual canvass may be used but the emphasis should be upon the "perpetual pledge," with "step-up" Sundays through the year which provide opportunities for increasing pledges and making new ones.

The pastor should study the financial record as a part of supervision. He should know the giving status of each member. How often ministers say, "I don't know what a single member of my church gives, and I don't want to know." This is an unfortunate position for any minister to take. Pastors who assume this attitude are missing one of the great opportunities of their ministry to know the hearts of their members. How much money members give to the church and what they do with their paycheck is just as much in the realm of the "spiritual" and is just as much the minister's business as what they do in their social and moral relationships. Stewardship is not just a mere phase of the Christian life. The Christian life is a vital stewardship.

• *Giving and Attendance Are Related*

There is a close relation between giving and attendance. When a man does his duty financially, he often becomes more consistent in his other church relationships. The financial record, in a sense, registers the pulse-beat of the church. When a member gets behind on his pledge the minister should know about it. Whether the reason be a matter of personal offense, dire financial need, or plain neglect, the minister should know about it and minister to such families. One pastor says: "I keep my eye on the financial status of the church at all times. My church roll is marked in code, so that I know the giving habits of every member. Obviously in my pastoral calling I can do some direct and indirect teaching when the occasion demands it."

The pastor, through supervision, must see that church money is used for the purposes for which it is raised. That sometimes requires great courage. Funds which have been raised for building purposes are occasionally misused. Frequently money given to missions has been included in the general treasury and used to pay pastor's salary and other current expenses. That is a custom altogether too prevalent in churches. The director of one of our greatest mission boards says: "I think the number of such churches would run into the thousands. Here is a distinct problem in Christian ethics. It is one that the pastor himself must face and work out."

Ministers need to recognize the "eloquence of financial facts." The pastor should see that the finance chairman gives a complete report of the entire financial situation monthly or quarterly. Rev. James W. Fifield, Jr., of Los Angeles, suggests that "stockholders' meetings" for the entire membership be held for the frank consideration of financial problems, and at such meetings the members should be given the entire picture. There should be no whispered secrets between the minister and "certain officers." When financial facts are kept before the congregation, emergencies are not likely to creep up, and if they do, there is already at hand intelligent knowledge for meeting them.

• *The Pastor's Personal Finances*

The minister, finally, who is successful as a supervisor of church finances, must demonstrate his own personal financial competence. He must be able to practice in his intimate relationships what he preaches to his officers. He may do this, first, by paying his own personal bills promptly; second, by practicing a stewardship of tithing; third, by raising enough money so as to convince his laymen that he is capable of doing the thing he asks them to do.

With such a background of personal training and experience, the pastor is better able to estimate the potentiality of his congregation. He is better qualified to select the right leaders upon whom to place definite responsibility. He knows better how to educate his constituency in basic stewardship principles.

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

Rev. STANLEY ARMSTRONG HUNTER was ordained in the Presbyterian ministry in 1914 and was minister of the Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn, for a brief period. Then followed an eight-year pastorate at North Church in Pittsburgh. Since 1924 he has led the activities of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, Cal. Mr. Hunter received his education at Princeton and Columbia universities and at Union Theological Seminary.

For several years Rev. BERYL D. COHON was associate rabbi of Temple Israel in Boston and lecturer on Judaism and the Old Testament in Boston University School of Religion. He is now rabbi of Temple Sinai, Boston. He is the author of *Introduction to Judaism* and *Ethics of the Rabbis.* His sermon published in this issue celebrates the Jewish New Year, which falls this year on October 3.

A graduate of Princeton University and Union Seminary, Rev. WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, JR., was for a number of years minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Glendale, Ohio. He has recently entered upon his new task as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Ill., the church which was once attended by Abraham Lincoln.

Rev. CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER *received* his education at Northwestern University and Garrett Biblical Institute. He has been minister of the Methodist churches of Oconomowoc and Ripon, Wis., and has just been appointed pastor of the First Methodist Church, Racine, in the same state. Mr. Seidenspinner is soon to publish a book dealing with Christian worship.

Since 1937 Rev. FRED E. LUCHS *has* been pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Athens, Ohio, seat of Ohio University. For several years he ministered at the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Knox, Pa. His education was received at Franklin and Marshall College, Eastern Theological Seminary, Hartford Seminary, the University of Chicago and Chicago Theological Seminary. Last year he was selected as an exchange preacher to churches of Great Britain and the American churches in Paris and Berlin.

Rev. PAUL SCHERER *has been minister* of the Holy Trinity Church, New York city, since 1920. He is a graduate of the College of Charleston (S. C.) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Mt. Airy, Pa. Dr. Scherer has won wide favor as a radio preacher and as a speaker before university audiences. His sermon published in this issue was delivered at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club.

Rev. CHARLES N. THORP *is the minister* of the Congregational Church in Chatham, Mass.

Rev. RALPH E. VALENTINE *is state secretary* and director of Christian education of the West Virginia Christian Missionary Society.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

O. W. BUSCHGEN, Westminster Presbyterian, Elizabeth, N. J. "The Next Order of Business." Isa. 59:19(m)—"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a banner against him."

FRANK FITT, Grosse Pointe Memorial, Gross Pointe Farms, Mich. "Living for Tomorrow." Heb. 11:8—"And he went out, not knowing whither he went."

HERBERT BOOTH SMITH, Immanuel Presbyterian, Los Angeles, Cal. "Has Religion Any Place in National Life?" Deut. 4:8, 9—"And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law? Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligent, lest they depart from thy heart."

CLARENCE A. SPAULDING, First Presbyterian, River Forest, Ill. "The Dilemma of the Good Man." Psalm 11:3—"If the foundations be destroyed what shall the righteous do?" (Preached at Stanford University.)

DAVID NELSON BEACH, Plymouth, Minneapolis. "In a Jackal World." Luke 14:30—"This man began to build and was not able to finish."

ERVIN C. TIPTON, First Methodist, Corning, Cal. "Disputed Passage." John 16:33—"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

ALFRED J. WOLD, Hoge Memorial Presbyterian, Columbus, O. "Divine Overtones." Gen. 18:25b—"Shall not the judge . . . do right?"

KENDRICK STRONG, Mt. Desert Larger Parish, Seal Harbor, Me. "Crazy Christians." Acts. 26:24—"Paul, thou art mad!"

E. J. HIERHOLZER, Hackberry St. Methodist, San Antonio, Tex. "Maintaining Christian Values." I Thess. 5:21—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

ROBERT E. BRETH, Wallis Run Methodist, Proctor, Pa. "Revival and God." II Chron. 7:15—"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

JAMES C. PERKINS, Methodist-Congregational, Schroon Lake, N. Y. "The Brethren of the Common Table" (Communion address). Matt. 28:8c—". . . and all ye are brethren."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of Sermon

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Text used (write out the text)

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Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

THE United States is now on a war basis. With the passage of the conscription bill, the projection of a vast preparedness program oriented toward a particular enemy, the enormous aid already being given to Britain in the shape of destroyers and planes, the leasing of naval bases extending from Newfoundland to the Caribbean, the clothing of the President with almost unlimited power, and the arousal of public feeling to the point of accepting the thesis that the fall of Britain will spell inevitable war with Hitler, we are now potentially at war. It remains now only to give the word and the country will be in the war for all we are worth. That word may be given after the November election. The resort to conscription was the final step in the shifting of the national life from a peacetime to a wartime basis. I am not a pacifist in the sense in which that term is usually applied. I believe that a reasonable preparedness to guard the nation against the perils of an incalculable future was inevitable. But my blood boils with resentment against our national leadership which has steadily, step by step, pushed the country to the verge of actual battle. Personally and editorially, I have maintained the thesis that this is not America's war. Our people are as truly the victim of the Fuehrer principle as are the people of Germany and Italy. Under the slogan of "national unity," our Fuehrer has been able to remove foreign policy from the political campaign. The American way of life has now been abandoned and a way of life that is alien to our democracy has taken its place. I believe that history will hold up to execration those who have thrust this nation thus far into totalitarianism.

Conscription—the Final Step Short of War

The Book of the Month

CAN CHRISTIANITY SAVE CIVILIZATION? *By Walter M. Horton. Harper and Brothers. $2.00.*

NOBODY now doubts that civilization needs saving! It is going to wreck before our eyes, and that not merely in the ruin which the war is causing but in the inner soul of modern society. Dr. Horton sees that our Western civilization rests upon unstable and false foundations. We have come to the end of a great cultural cycle which is characterized by the disintegration of human community through the loss of a sense of the meaning of life. This is no new thing in history but has occurred again and again in the cultures of the East as well as in the West. Civilizations have always been saved—not in the sense of being "preserved," but of being regenerated—by the emergence of some fresh religious movement. With an impressive sweep of historical knowledge Dr. Horton traces many such regenerative contributions in Eastern and primitive cultures which had not been touched by Christianity. But he holds that the present disintegration is world-wide and can be arrested only by a religious faith which is inherently universal. For Dr. Horton, only Christianity adequately matches this planetary need. But "our churches must undergo a great transfiguration before they are fit to reconstruct the world." This transfiguration will seem like the emergence of a new Christianity unlike any previous form which our faith has yet manifested in history. The book is written in the easy, vivid and attractive style which has won for Dr. Horton through his many other books a wide reading public.

A Thought for the Month

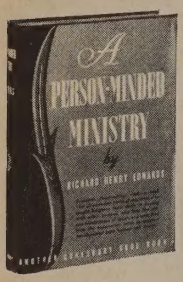
THE French minister of labor has recently declared that France, conquered by Hitler, is likely to become a nation of peasants. This was said without a touch of regret. The Petain regime has apparently set its compass for the reorientation of the national life toward those human values which grow more directly out of contact with the soil than out of the factory, which belong to the country in contrast to the city. Whether the new German control will allow a sufficient margin of freedom in which to develop an economy emancipated from the barbaric and inhumane tyranny of machine industry, only time will tell. But the sigh of relief with which the French people, in the day of their humiliation, abandon a social order topheavy with militarism and imperialism and return to the simplicities of an economy which is primarily agrarian, is understandable. With the partial exception of a few small nations, European economy has been primarily an economy of capitalistic industrialism, which has been used to support great military establishments which, in turn, were necessary to support those colossal artifacts, called empires. The glory of these empires was chiefly the emolument of the owning and ruling classes who translated it into "patriotism" and got the common people to accept it as their supreme loyalty. To abandon this system will seem to us like a great sacrifice; and to be robbed of it, like a great misfortune. But this is because we, too, are obfuscated with the false sense of values which our overwrought capitalistic industrialism has bred in us—those values which are associated with the mythical concept of the "economic man." We call it an economy of abundance—of sheer quantitative multiplication of *things*. If, after the war, there is enough sanity left in the nations to project an orderly world, it will have to be an economy of "sacrifice" rather than an economy of our meretricious "abundance."

Promise of a New Economy

Charles Clayton Morrison

• IMPORTANT *New Books* •

A Person-Minded Ministry



RICHARD HENRY EDWARDS

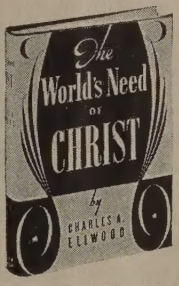
The central conviction of this book is the inherent sacredness of persons; its central aim is to help all sorts of ministers, ordained or unordained, to approach the "person-mindedness" of Jesus as the supreme artist in creative relationships both human and divine. "The book puts iron into the blood." —*Christian Advocate (Nashville).*

Some of the Chapters: PERSON-MINDEDNESS. ACHIEVING TOGETHERNESS. GETTING AND FACING FACTS. THE MINISTER AS A QUICKENER AND GUIDE OF VOLUNTARY GROUPS. THE MINISTER AS INTERPRETER OF ETERNAL PERSONAL VALUES. PREPARATION FOR A PERSON-MINDED MINISTRY.

$2

The World's Need of Christ

CHARLES A. ELLWOOD



Clearly amid the social confusion of our time, a distinguished social scientist here proclaims that "the teachings of Christ contain the only possible solution of the increasing conflict in human relations." He challenges men to a new "imitation of Christ." *The Foreword* to the book is by Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert. (Ready October 20.)

The Chapters: THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. THE NEGLECT OF CHRIST IN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY. THE NEGLECT OF CHRIST IN RELIGION AND IN THE CHURCH. THE NEGLECT OF CHRIST IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY. THE NEGLECT OF CHRIST IN POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. THE CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION OF OUR CIVILIZATION.

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The Springs of Creative Living • ROLLO MAY

This book seeks to discover the foundations of meaning by which even in times of turmoil the individual personality may find rich fulfillment. The study explores the fascinating collaboration between the new psychology of personality and the Christian understanding of man, recognizing the interdependence of psychotherapy and religion as they open the way to human creativity. Like Dr. May's earlier book, THE ART OF COUNSELING, the present volume is free from cliches, illuminated by a sound understanding of the human soul, and vitalized by a keen appreciation of the infinite resources of religion.

The Chapters: THE THIRST FOR MEANING. BUT WHAT KIND OF MEANING? FREEDOM AND DESTINY. TOO MUCH FREEDOM MAKES US MAD. CREATIVITY AND SIN. WHAT IS HEALTHY RELIGION? HAPPINESS. A THEOLOGY OF LIFE. GRACE AND CLARIFICATION.

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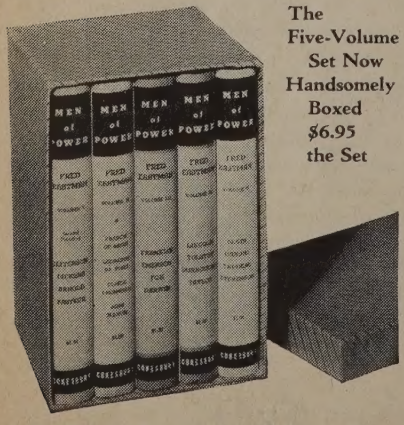

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